ASSESSMENT POLICY FOR VIRGINIA ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAMS

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I. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

A. NEED FOR ASSESSMENT POLICY

The assessment policies in this document are designed as a guide for adult education programs in Virginia. They provide a detailed explanation of the state and local program responsibilities for assessment specific to the National Reporting System (NRS) and state requirements. These policies apply to the approved assessments that programs may use to report educational gain in compliance with NRS requirements.

📖 **Policy 1.1**
Programs must adhere to the assessment policies identified to provide fair and equitable access of services to learners, make decisions about the quality of programs, and identify the need for program improvement.

Administering assessments according to sound policy is necessary for several reasons.

- Adults seeking services must be provided fair and equitable access to services. If an assessment is administered incorrectly, the adult may be denied services or placed at an inappropriate level. The result is a learner who may lose an opportunity to be successful or becomes frustrated with an improper placement. Factors such as the lack of lighting, failure to provide accommodations, overusing test booklets, or administering outdated test booklets may cause an inaccurate identification of a learner's level and ability.
- Local providers must make decisions about program quality and the need for improvement at the class, teacher, and learner levels. A goal of the Office of Adult Education and Literacy is that all programs providing adult basic education and literacy (ABE) services, including English literacy and civics (EL/Civics) services, meet or exceed federal and state targets for performance. Proper assessments play a critical role in this process.
- OAEL must make decisions about the quality of programs and the need for improvement. An assessment policy provides a framework for consistency and comparability of programs. In addition, an assessment policy is a piece of a larger programmatic plan that influences areas such as curriculum implementation and content standards development.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Assessments administered must be reliable and valid for learners, staff, local programs, and the OAEL to have confidence in the decisions that are made. Each of the standardized assessments identified in this policy manual have been reviewed for reliability and validity. As a brief review, reliability and validity have been defined.

Reliability: An assessment is reliable if it accurately measures the skills and abilities for which it was developed. For example, to measure a person's understanding of calculating area, the assessment must provide problems that specifically have the person calculate area.

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Validity: An assessment is valid if it can consistently measure the skills and abilities across all intended audiences (i.e., ages, ethnicities, gender, location, etc.) for which it was designed. For example, if an assessment produces consistent results in a rural area but not an urban area, the assessment may not be valid for use in all areas.

<u>EDUCATIONAL GAIN</u>

The NRS mandates assessment in adult education programs to determine educational functioning level (EFL) gains. NRS identifies twelve EFLs as part of its accountability measures. Four EFLs are in ABE, two in adult secondary education (ASE), and six in English as a second language (ESL). Each functioning level addresses a general set of standards and competencies that adults must demonstrate to move to the next level. Three competency areas are discussed within each functioning level and include: basic reading and writing skills, numeracy skills, and functional and workplace skills.

<u>NON-NRS ASSESSMENTS</u>

Programs are encouraged to use additional assessments in support of the teaching and learning process. However, local-level assessments and assessment instruments not defined in this document may not substitute for those standardized instruments prescribed for NRS reporting and gain measurement.

B. PURPOSES AND USES OF ASSESSMENT

Adult learners enter programs with a wide range of educational backgrounds and proficiency levels. The purpose of educational assessment is to determine an individual's or group of individuals' levels of educational functioning at a point in time. Program administrators and teachers may use assessment information to make decisions about their respective programs. The information may also be used diagnostically to group learners, determine an appropriate course of instruction, or indicate an individual's degree of improvement from one point in time to another. The result is an improved teaching and learning experience.

<u>MEASURE LEARNER EDUCATIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND PROGRESS</u>

Assessments can improve student retention by documenting improvement. Assessments provide the learner with an opportunity to determine the amount of progress that has been made. In terms of standards, assessment also identifies the knowledge or skills that the learner has developed. However, administrators and teachers must ensure that the assessment administered measures the knowledge or skills that are being taught.

<u>GUIDE AND DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INSTRUCTION</u>

Assessments offer staff an opportunity to determine the effectiveness of instruction. When a learner or learners complete an assessment, teachers and administrators are able to identify

specific competencies or skills that learners may or may not have mastered. From this information, adjustments or realignment of coursework may occur to address the specific competencies and skills that should be introduced or revisited.

<u>MAKE DECISIONS RELATED TO LEARNER, STAFF, AND PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY</u>

Assessments provide an opportunity to measure statistically the performance of people and programs. Decisions about the use of specific curriculum, length of instruction, or program location may be adjusted once assessments are completed. Assessment results may also influence funding decisions.

C. SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW

The NRS and state policies require local providers to strictly adhere to the policies and guidelines set forth in this document. Assessments are required by programs reporting to the NRS. Decisions made at the class, program, and state levels are influenced by the results of these assessments. Unless the assessments are reliable and valid, decisions made may be inappropriate or incorrect. For continuous program improvement, local providers should review the assessment results regularly. The following tables provide a brief summary of the approved assessments in Virginia as defined by program. More complete descriptions of each of the assessments are provided in *Section III Guidelines for Each Assessment* (P. 19).

<u>GENERAL TERMS</u>

Subject(s) Assessment instruments may have separate subject areas developed for testing. The specific subjects are identified here.

Type of Learner The applicable learner program that the assessment was designed for is indicated. Many of the assessments have locator instruments and multiple forms that are acceptable and required depending on the learner's educational functioning level.

Expiration Date Each assessment has a target date for expiration. Expiration dates are subject to change depending on the development of new assessments, updates to existing assessments, or state review and decision.

Pre-test Time All learners must be assessed within a designated time period.

Post-test Times Each assessment, through norming processes and reliability/validity studies, has established guidelines for when a learner may be post-tested. Additionally, each assessment has established guidelines for when a form may be repeated for post-testing. Post-test times are often dependent upon whether an assessment is being administered to a new or continuing learner.

EFL Alignment and NRS Scale Scores While assessments may measure skills at a variety of levels, the assessments represented have been correlated to specific NRS levels and scale scores. Various assessments may only correlate to learners at specific levels.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION (ABE) AND ADULT SECONDARY EDUCATION (ASE) *

Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)			
SUBJECT(S)	Reading; Math		
TYPE OF LEARNER	ABE; ASE		
EXPIRATION DATE	**June 30, 2010**		
PRE-TEST TIME	Less than 6 hours of instruction		
POST-TEST TIMES	100 hours (new learner) † 75 – 100 hours (continuing learners)		
EFL ALIGNMENT AND NRS SCALE SCORES		Reading	Math
	☑ ABE Beginning Literacy	0 – 200	0 – 200
	☑ ABE Beginning Basic Education	201 – 210	201 – 210
	☑ ABE Intermediate Low	211 – 220	211 – 220
	☑ ABE Intermediate High	221 – 235	221 – 235
	☑ ASE Low	236 – 245	236 – 245
	☑ ASE High	246 – 269	246 – 269

Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)				
SUBJECT(S)	Reading; Applied Math; Language (Writing)			
TYPE OF LEARNER	ABE; ASE			
EXPIRATION DATE	**June 30, 2008 (Form 7 and 8); June 30, 2010 (Form 9 and 10)**			
PRE-TEST TIME	Less than 6 hours of instruction			
POST-TEST TIMES	60 hours (same level, different form) 120 hours (same level, same form)			
EFL ALIGNMENT AND NRS SCALE SCORES		Reading	App. Math	Language
	☑ ABE Beginning Literacy	160 – 367	160 – 344	160 – 389
	☑ ABE Beginning Basic Education	368 – 460	345 – 444	390 – 490
	☑ ABE Intermediate Low	461 – 517	445 – 500	491 – 523
	☑ ABE Intermediate High	518 – 566	501 – 553	524 – 559
	☑ ASE Low	567 – 595	554 – 589	560 – 585
	☑ ASE High	596 – 812	590 – 795	586 – 826

The Official GED Practice Test (OPT) is used widely by programs to determine an individual's readiness to take the Official GED Tests. However, it is not approved as an assessment to measure and identify educational gain.

† When using the CASAS, programs must identify whether a learner is new or continuing. A new learner is either an individual who has not previously attended the program and, therefore, does not have an assessment reported, or one who is being assessed with the CASAS for the first time after having been assessed with a different instrument. A continuing learner is an individual who has attended the program during the previous or current fiscal year and who has been reported as being assessed with the CASAS during that time.

WorkKeys			
SUBJECT(S)	Reading; Applied Math; Writing		
TYPE OF LEARNER	ABE; ASE		
EXPIRATION DATE	**June 30, 2010**		
PRE-TEST TIME	Less than 6 hours of instruction		
POST-TEST TIMES	Completion of a semester or quarter course 60 – 100 hours		
EFL ALIGNMENT AND NRS SCALE SCORES		Reading	App. Math	Writing

EFL ALIGNMENT AND NRS SCALE SCORES		Reading	App. Math	Writing
	☐ ABE Beginning Literacy	N/A	N/A	N/A
	☐ ABE Beginning Basic Education	N/A	N/A	N/A
	☐ ABE Intermediate Low	N/A	N/A	N/A
	☑ ABE Intermediate High	75 – 78	75 – 77	75 – 77
	☑ ASE Low	79 – 81	78 – 81	78 – 85
	☑ ASE High	82 – 90	82 – 90	86 – 90

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Long Form			
SUBJECT(S)	Oral (Speaking and Listening); Literacy (Reading and Writing)		
TYPE OF LEARNER	ESL		
EXPIRATION DATE	**June 30, 2008 (Oral); June 30, 2010 (Literacy)**		
PRE-TEST TIME	Less than 6 hours of instruction		
POST-TEST TIMES	60 hours (minimum) 80 – 100 hours (recommended)		
EFL ALIGNMENT AND NRS SCALE SCORES	Oral		Reading and Writing
	☑ ESL Beginning Literacy 0 – 15		☑ ESL Beginning Literacy 0 – 7
	☑ ESL Low Beginning 16 – 28		☑ ESL Low Beginning 8 – 35
	☑ ESL High Beginning 29 – 41		☑ ESL High Beginning 36 – 46
	☑ ESL Intermediate Low 42 – 50		☑ ESL Intermediate Low 47 – 53
	☐ ESL Intermediate High 51 – 57		☑ ESL Intermediate High 54 – 65
	☐ ESL Advanced 58 – 64		☑ ESL Advanced 66 – 70

Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Plus			
SUBJECT(S)	Oral (Speaking and Listening)		
TYPE OF LEARNER	ESL		
EXPIRATION DATE	**June 30, 2010**		
PRE-TEST TIME	Less than 6 hours of instruction		
POST-TEST TIMES	60 hours (minimum) 80 – 100 hours (recommended)		
EFL ALIGNMENT AND NRS SCALE SCORES	Oral		Speaking and Listening
	☑ ESL Beginning Literacy 0 – 400		☑ ESL Beginning Literacy 0 – 400
	☑ ESL Low Beginning 401 – 417		☑ ESL Low Beginning 401 – 417
	☑ ESL High Beginning 418 – 438		☑ ESL High Beginning 418 – 438
	☑ ESL Intermediate Low 439 – 472		☑ ESL Intermediate Low 439 – 472
	☑ ESL Intermediate High 473 – 506		☑ ESL Intermediate High 473 – 506
	☑ ESL Advanced 507 – 540		☑ ESL Advanced 507 – 540

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Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) Life Skills			
SUBJECT(S)	Speaking and Listening; Reading		
TYPE OF LEARNER	ESL		
EXPIRATION DATE	**June 30, 2010**		
PRE-TEST TIME	Less than 6 hours of instruction		
POST-TEST TIMES	100 hours (new learner)* 75 – 100 hours (continuing learners)		
EFL ALIGNMENT AND NRS SCALE SCORES	Speaking and Listening		Reading
	☑ ESL Beginning Literacy 0 – 180		☑ ESL Beginning Literacy 0 – 180
	☑ ESL Low Beginning 181 – 190		☑ ESL Low Beginning 181 – 190
	☑ ESL High Beginning 191 – 200		☑ ESL High Beginning 191 – 200
	☑ ESL Intermediate Low 201 – 210		☑ ESL Intermediate Low 201 – 210
	☑ ESL Intermediate High 211 – 220		☑ ESL Intermediate High 211 – 220
	☑ ESL Advanced 221 – 235		☑ ESL Advanced 221 – 235

When using the CASAS, programs must identify whether a learner is new or continuing. A new learner is either an individual who has not previously attended the program and, therefore, does not have an assessment reported, or one who is being assessed with the CASAS for the first time after having been assessed with a different instrument. A continuing learner is an individual who has attended the program during the previous or current fiscal year and who has been reported as being assessed with the CASAS during that time.

D. RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING

Virginia Department of Education
Office of Adult Education and Literacy
Telephone: (804) 225-2075
Fax: (804) 225-3352
Toll Free: (800) 292-3820
Web site: http://www.vdoe.vi.virginia.gov/instruction/adulted/index.shtml

Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC)
Telephone: (804) 828-6521
Toll Free: (800) 237-0178
Fax: (804) 828-7539
Web site: http://www.valrc.org/

ASSESSMENT DIRECT CONTACTS

BEST Long Form and BEST Plus

Center for Applied Linguistics
Washington, DC
Phone: (202) 362-0700
E-mail: info@cal.org
Web site: http://www.cal.org/

CASAS

CASAS
San Diego, CA
Phone: (858) 292-2900
Web site: http://www.casas.org/home/

TABE

CTB/McGraw-Hill
Monterey, CA
Phone: (800) 538-9547
Web site: http://www.ctb.com/

WorkKeys

ACT
Iowa City, IA
Phone: (800) 967-5539
E-mail: workkeys@act.org
Web site: http://www.act.org/workkeys/

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II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

A. LEARNERS TO BE ASSESSED

📖 **Policy 2.1**

Programs must assess all learners reported into the NRS Web-based data system. Assessments must meet the following standards:
- **A pre-test must be administered within the first 6 hours of instruction.**
- **A post-test must be administered within the time frame identified by the test publisher.***

All learners seeking services who will be reported in the NRS Web-based data system must be assessed on an approved NRS and state assessment. Selection of assessment(s) should be based on the type of instruction provided to learners. For example, if an ESL learner has instruction primarily in reading, the learner should be assessed on an instrument that measures reading gain for ESL learners. Additionally, the local program should select instruments aligned to the curriculum standards for GED and ESL.

Programs are not obligated to pre-test individuals in all areas (i.e., reading, mathematics, or writing). However, programs should consider administering assessments in all areas in which instruction is provided. Finally, programs that serve ABE and ESL learners should consider the use of an assessment that may bridge the transition from ESL to ABE programs.

PRE-TESTING

The NRS requires that the state establish a uniform time for programs to pre-test adult learners as the basis for determining accurate placement in an EFL corresponding with NRS definitions. Pre-testing information serves two fundamental purposes. First, it is the baseline upon which programs will measure learners' EFL advancements. Second, pre-test information is used to develop effective instructional plans for each learner.

POST-TESTING

Post-testing is necessary to determine whether individuals advance in EFLs. This information is useful to the learner, the teacher, and the program manager. It is also one measure of accountability required for NRS purposes. At a minimum, learners should be post-tested in the area in which they pre-tested and in which they received instruction.

Post-test Timeframe Waiver
- A waiver for individual learners to the test publisher guidelines for post-testing must meet one of the following specific criteria to be approved for reporting.
- Professional judgment by program staff indicates that the learner has made unanticipated gains resulting from circumstances outside the local program's instructional setting.

* If a learner must be post-tested before the required time frame, a waiver must be submitted in the NRS Web-based data system identifying the approved justification for the waiver.

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- The learner has an inability to continue participation due to: (1) an employment change; (2) a significant health issue; (3) a family situation; (4) a lack of transportation; (5) a lack of child care; or (6) taking the GED Tests **AND** is within five hours or less of meeting the required post-test time frame.

PROGRAM EXIT

📖 **Policy 2.2**

Programs must administer a new pre-test for any learner who has spent 90 or more consecutive days without program attendance or services.

Gaps in program services and attendance are likely to affect the learner's EFL. A learner must receive program services and have continuous (monthly) attendance identified in the NRS Web-based data system for the last assessment of record to be used for measuring educational gain. In situations where a learner has continuous attendance across fiscal years, his/her previous assessment may be used for measuring educational gain against a current post-test. However, if a learner has a gap of 90 or more consecutive days without attendance and program services, the learner must be administered a new pre-test to establish the current EFL.

B. ASSESSMENTS PERMITTED

📖 **Policy 2.3**

Programs must administer to adult learners only those assessments that are NRS and state approved. All approved assessments must be administered in English.

The following assessment instruments, correlated to subject areas and program type, are accepted for reporting NRS EFL performance and progress. Only the assessment instruments identified here may be used for this purpose. All other assessments must be approved through a review by the U. S. Department of Education. **Virginia reserves the right not to permit the use of an assessment even when the assessment is approved by the U. S. Department of Education**.

Assessment Instrument	Subject	Program Type
BEST Long Form	Oral; Literacy	ESL
BEST Plus	Oral	ESL
CASAS Life Skills	Reading; Speaking and Listening	ESL
CASAS Life Skills	Reading; Mathematics	ABE/ASE
TABE	Reading; Applied Mathematics; Language	ABE/ASE
WorkKeys	Reading; Applied Mathematics; Writing	ABE/ASE

Each assessment identified has been selected because it meets the following criteria:

- Is appropriate for measuring literacy and language development of adult learners

- Has standardized administration and scoring procedures
- Has alternate, equivalent forms for pre- and post-testing
- Has evidence linking it to NRS EFL

OFFICIAL GED PRACTICE TEST (OPT)

The OPT is used widely by programs to determine individuals' readiness to take the Official GED Tests. However, it is not approved as an assessment to measure and identify educational gain and, therefore, may not be reported.

C. TRAINING FOR ADMINISTERING ASSESSMENTS

📖 **Policy 2.4**

All staff who administer assessments in a program must:
- **successfully complete training on the OAEL assessment policy annually;**
- **successfully complete training to administer the assessment(s) every two years; and**
- **successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment, if new staff.**

Staff must complete training on the assessment policies for Virginia and must be qualified in each area in which they plan to administer assessments. The Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC) coordinates approved training. Assessment training schedules are available at the beginning of each fiscal year. Training is most often provided without charge to the local program or participants. Online training opportunities are available for selected assessments.

NEW STAFF

Staff new to adult education programs and learner assessments may not have the experience of administering assessments for identification of educational gain. Consequently, new staff must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment.

RETURNING STAFF

Staff returning to adult education programs and learner assessments must re-certify on assessments every two years. Re-certification occurs through an online refresher mini-course. Returning staff are not required to administer five assessments to be classified as a qualified assessor.

QUALIFIED ASSESSORS

A staff member is considered a qualified assessor upon successful completion of assessment training. All staff members who continue to administer assessments must re-qualify at least

once every **two** years. Local programs must submit identification of qualified assessors annually via the NRS Web-based data system. A report is available in the data system to identify when a staff is required to complete re-qualification training.

D. ACCOMMODATING FOR LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES OR OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS

📖 **Policy 2.5**

Learners with professionally certified documentation who self-identify a given physical, mental, or emotional disability must be provided an appropriate accommodation for assessment of EFL.

Adults with physical, mental, or emotional disabilities may not be able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a standardized test administration and/or with a standard test format. In order to accurately reflect their true EFL, adults with professionally certified documentation identifying disabilities should receive accommodations based on their disability. Providing accommodations to adults with documented disabilities will result in a more accurate assessment of their EFLs.

If a learner self-identifies a disability, it is the responsibility of the local program to provide reasonable accommodations. Local programs may not deny or prevent access to services based on a learner's disability. The local program may be required to absorb the costs related to the accommodation(s). By not providing an accommodation, programs could find themselves in violation of federal law for failure to provide appropriate accommodations for individuals with documented disabilities.

<u>IDENTIFYING DOCUMENTATION</u>

Learners who self-identify a physical, mental, or emotional disability must provide certified documentation from a professional. Documentation must include a letter on official letterhead, signed by a certifying professional who specializes in the diagnosis of the disability. Documentation should identify the learner's history with the disability or limitation, report the learner's current ability level, discuss the reason(s) for accommodation, and indicate a specific recommendation(s). The documentation should indicate how long to provide an accommodation. The most common forms of documentation include:

- professional diagnostician's identification indicating the appropriate DSM_IV Code*;
- individualized educational plan (IEP);
- 504 Plan;
- psychological assessment or report; and
- physical ability report.

*The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) is a handbook published by the American Psychiatric Association and used by mental health professionals worldwide. The DSM categorizes mental disorders and the criteria for diagnosing them. Diagnosticians use DSM codes to identify specific disorders.

Certifying professionals include psychologists, psychiatrists, clinicians, diagnosticians, general practitioners, or other medical physicians.

<u>PROCEDURES FOR IDENTIFYING LEARNERS</u> *

When documentation does not exist to identify a disability and the need for accommodations, the local program may elect to conduct screening of learners suspected of requiring accommodations. It is the responsibility of the local program to inform the learner of the reasons for being screened.

> *Screening*
> During the intake process or first few days of class preceding an assessment, learners may participate in individual or group screening. Screening considers various factors of a learner's physical, mental, and emotional ability to determine if a potential disability exists. Screening may not indicate that the learner has a disability and should not be considered a diagnosis. It may indicate the need for further testing by a certified professional to make an official diagnosis.
>
> Once the screening has been completed, it is the responsibility of the local program staff to discuss the results with the learner. A discussion of observations and feedback from the learner should be completed in a private setting. Local program staff should be careful not to suggest a diagnosis or assign a label to the learner. If it appears that the learner may require further diagnostic testing, the local program staff should offer the opportunity to provide a referral to the appropriate organization or agency.
>
> *Diagnostic Testing*
> A certified professional performs diagnostic testing that may result in an official diagnosis of a disability or special need. In general, local programs may not have staff with the professional credentials to make an official diagnosis. At no point should local program staff offer an official diagnosis to a learner.

<u>TYPES OF SCREENING</u>

There are several forms of screening for physical, mental, and emotional disabilities that are apparent or hidden. These screenings may occur formally or informally. The local program or outside providers may conduct the screening depending on staff knowledge and available resources. Common screening methods include:

- Vision screening
- Dental screening
- Basic physical screening
- Learner observations – assignment completion and work samples
- Counseling sessions – formally or informally before, during, and after instruction
- Learner communication – comments or questions

*Signed Consent – If a learner is screened individually by the program, he/she must provide signed consent agreeing to be screened. The signed consent should indicate who will have access to the information identified in the screening

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The *Bridges to Practice* project provides detailed information regarding screening and various types of instruments specific to learning disabilities. *Bridges to Practice* was developed by the National Institute for Literacy. The materials are designed to help teachers, social workers, employment counselors, job coaches and others recognize learning disabilities, learn how to implement a screening process in a program, and learn what to do when an adult has been diagnosed with a disability. Local program staff may want to contact a local entity that conducts diagnostic testing for further information about screening.

TYPES OF ACCOMMODATIONS

Most test publishers provide recommendations or guidelines for accommodating various disabilities. Local providers should review the specific test publisher guidelines for identified accommodations and the availability of resources.

The most common forms of accommodations include:

- Extended time
- Private room
- Use of a standard calculator or talking calculator
- One test per day
- Scribe
- Audio version
- Braille version
- Large print version

Additionally, learners should have an opportunity to use test-taking aides that do not affect the administration of the test. Test aides include:

- Magnifying glasses/lenses
- Overlays
- Straight-edge
- Adhesive notes/flags
- Highlighters

ADMINISTERING ACCOMMODATIONS *

The local program should consult the test publisher guidelines before testing to ensure that approved accommodations for the learner are permitted by the test publisher. In addition to meeting all of the standard requirements and policies related to assessing learners, the following administrative processes must be met:

Access
It is the responsibility of the local program staff to provide the learner with access to the accommodations once the official diagnosis has been made by a certified

While accommodations are not required for test aides, a review or demonstration during an intake process or within the first few days of class preceding an assessment may benefit all learners.

professional. Local program staff must provide adequate staff and resources for the variety of accommodations permitted. Separate testing rooms and additional staff during extended time are two examples.

This may be especially true when an interpreter or an audio version of an assessment is required. Learners with accommodations should not be singled-out.

Reporting
As with standard assessments, local program staff must report the results of the assessments administered with accommodations. The results must be reported on the student intake form and in the NRS Web-based data system. Both the student intake form and the data system provide an opportunity to indicate when an accommodation is granted and the type(s) of accommodation provided.

Monitoring and Review
For each learner provided an accommodation, local program staff should monitor and review the results. When possible, local program staff should follow-up with the learner for reactions and observations concerning the accommodation. From the local program perspective, consideration should be made to indicate if the accommodations were appropriate. Changes to the test environment or staff assisting with the accommodations may be necessary. As learners begin to recognize the value in having accommodations, an increased demand may result and require the allocation of additional resources. Finally, local program staff may need to create or enhance collaborations with other organizations to provide accommodations.

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III. GUIDELINES FOR EACH ASSESSMENT

A. GENERAL OVERVIEW

Each assessment has specific administration procedures. Procedures have been established to maintain the reliability and validity of each assessment. Time limits, uses of locators, and alternating forms have all been designed and established to provide each learner with an equal opportunity to find success. The procedures for each assessment are identified on the following pages. Local programs should pay special attention to the training requirements and when accommodations may be provided. The following is a brief explanation of each category presented.

Assessment Name The full, official name of the assessment is identified for reference.

Applicable Program The applicable program that the assessment was designed for is indicated.

Subject Assessment instruments may have separate subject areas developed for testing. The specific subject is identified here.

Active Date and Expiration Date Each assessment has a date that it was approved for use and reporting. Additionally, each assessment has a target date for expiration. Expiration dates are subject to change depending on the development of new assessments, updates to existing assessments, or state review and decision.

Recommended NRS Levels While assessments may measure skills at a variety of levels, the assessments represented have been correlated to specific NRS levels. Various assessments may only correlate to learners at specific levels.

Version Available Assessments may be available in computer-assisted or printed versions. In some cases the computer-assisted version is available for use on a local computer or online.

Administration Type Some assessments may only be administered to learners individually, while other assessments may be administered individually or in a group setting.

Administration Time Each assessment has an estimated amount of time for completion. Also, many assessments have specific time limits for learner completion of test items.

Locator Required A locator is often required to determine the specific level and/or form to administer to the learner before the assessment is administered.

Forms Available Most assessments have more than one form available to address the need and/or requirement to post-test learners. Different forms provide an opportunity to assess learners on similar but different questions within the same skill sets.

Length before Pre-test All learners must be assessed within a designated time period.

Length before Post-test Each assessment, through norming processes and reliability/validity studies, has established guidelines for when a learner may be post-tested. Additionally, each assessment has established guidelines for when a form may be repeated for post-testing.

Item Type/Content A brief overview of the main concepts and skills of each assessment are identified. This is not comprehensive.

Scoring Procedures Each assessment has defined scoring procedures. Some assessments only provide a manual scoring process with conversions of raw (correct) scores to scale scores. However, a few assessments are scored using a computer with/without a scanner or online.

Accommodations A few assessments identify accommodations that may be made for learners with special needs.

Training Requirements To ensure the reliability and validity of assessment results, a certified assessor must complete training on the specific assessment before administering the assessment.

B. IDENTIFYING EACH ASSESSMENT

Assessment Name	**BASIC ENGLISH SKILLS TEST (BEST) LONG FORM**
Applicable Program	ESL
Subject	Oral (Speaking and Listening)
Active Date	July 1, 2003
Expiration Date	June 30, 2008
Recommended NRS Levels	☑ ESL Beginning Literacy ☑ ESL Low Beginning ☑ ESL High Beginning ☑ ESL Intermediate Low ☐ ESL Intermediate High ☐ ESL Advanced
Version Available	Print
Administration Type	Individual
Administration Time	15 minutes (approximately) *(Lower literacy levels may take a shorter amount of time.)*
Locator Required	No
Forms Available	B and C
Length before Pre-test	Less than 6 hours of instruction
Length before Post-test	60 hours minimum; 80 – 100 hours recommended
Item Type/Content	The BEST Long Form – Oral addresses speaking and listening skills of English language learners. A one-to-one interview, using a picture cue book, is conducted by an interviewer. The learner must respond to and interpret everyday life comprehension and speaking tasks. Examples of content include general personal information, time, money, site words, and a brief writing task.
Scoring Procedures	Three skill areas are measured: Listening Comprehension, Communication, and Fluency. Responses are rated by the interviewer on a scale of 0-3 for each skill area. A raw score is generated and converted to a scale score. (*Scale score determines EFL.*)
Accommodations	See administrator's guide.
Training Requirements	All certified assessors for the BEST Long Form – Oral must complete the training workshop provided by VALRC. After successfully completing the workshop, participants must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Assessment Name	**BASIC ENGLISH SKILLS TEST (BEST) LONG FORM**
Applicable Program	ESL
Subject	Literacy (Reading and Writing)
Active Date	July 1, 2003
Expiration Date	June 30, 2010
Recommended NRS Levels	☑ ESL Beginning Literacy ☑ ESL Low Beginning ☑ ESL High Beginning ☑ ESL Intermediate Low ☑ ESL Intermediate High ☑ ESL Advanced
Version Available	Print
Administration Type	Individual or Group
Administration Time	1 hour (approximately) *(Lower literacy levels may take a shorter amount of time.)*
Locator Required	No
Forms Available	B and C
Length before Pre-test	Less than 6 hours of instruction
Length before Post-test	60 hours minimum; 80 – 100 hours recommended
Item Type/Content	The BEST Long Form – Literacy addresses reading and writing skills of English language learners. The learner must respond to and interpret everyday life reading and writing tasks. Examples of content include labels, items in a newspaper, addressing an envelope, and completing a simple application.
Scoring Procedures	Two skill areas are measured: Reading and Writing. Responses are rated by the reviewer on a scale of 0-1, 0-2, or 0-5 depending on the specific part of the assessment. The reviewer is required to rate some questions on comprehension rather than accuracy of response. A raw score is generated and converted to a scale score. (*Scale score determines EFL.*)
Accommodations	See administrator's guide.
Training Requirements	All certified assessors for the BEST Long Form – Literacy must complete the training workshop provided by VALRC. After successfully completing the workshop, participants must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment.

Assessment Name	**BASIC ENGLISH SKILLS TEST (BEST) PLUS**
Applicable Program	ESL
Subject	Oral (Speaking and Listening)
Active Date	July 1, 2004
Expiration Date	June 30, 2010
Recommended NRS Levels	☑ ESL Beginning Literacy ☑ ESL Low Beginning ☑ ESL High Beginning ☑ ESL Intermediate Low ☑ ESL Intermediate High ☑ ESL Advanced
Version Available	Computer-assisted (local computer); Print *(Programs are encouraged to use the computer-assisted version.)*
Administration Type	Individual
Administration Time	1 hour (approximately)
Locator Required	Yes A locator assesses the level of questions for the learner (levels 1, 2, or 3).
Forms Available	Computer-assisted: Adaptive questions respond to the learner's ability. Print: A, B, and C
Length before Pre-test	Less than 6 hours of instruction
Length before Post-test	60 hours minimum; 80 – 100 hours recommended
Item Type/Content	The BEST Plus – Oral addresses speaking and listening skills of English language learners. The learner must respond to and interpret everyday life tasks in personal, occupational, and public areas. Examples of content include health, parenting, employment, citizenship, and transportation.
Scoring Procedures	Computer-assisted: Learner responses are identified, rated on a scoring rubric by the reviewer, and then entered into the computer. Print: All rated responses by the reviewer must be entered into the scoring software for conversion to a scale score. *(Scale score determines EFL.)*
Accommodations	See administrator's guide.
Training Requirements	All certified assessors for BEST Plus must complete the training workshop provided by VALRC. After successfully completing the workshop, participants must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment.

Assessment Name	**COMPREHENSIVE ADULT STUDENT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (CASAS) LIFE SKILLS**
Applicable Program	ESL
Subject	Listening
Active Date	July 1, 2003
Expiration Date	June 30, 2010
Recommended NRS Levels	☑ ESL Beginning Literacy ☑ ESL Low Beginning ☑ ESL High Beginning ☑ ESL Intermediate Low ☑ ESL Intermediate High ☑ ESL Advanced
Version Available	Print
Administration Type	Individual or Group
Administration Time	28 – 40 minutes (approximately)
Locator Required	No
Forms Available	Life Skills Series Forms 51-56; Levels A, B, and C
Length before Pre-test	Less than 6 hours of instruction
Length before Post-test	100 hours (new learner) 75 – 100 hours (continuing learners)
Item Type/Content	CASAS Life Skills – Listening is an assessment of comprehension for English language learners in everyday life skills. The assessment is administered by audiotape and includes items such as identifying a similar statement, answering a question, finishing a conversation, and making meaning from a dialogue.
Scoring Procedures	Printed answer keys and scoring charts are available for administrators. Scoring software is also available. Raw scores of correct learner responses are converted into scale scores. (*Scale score determines EFL.*)
Accommodations	Adjust environment but not format. (*See administrator's guide for complete description.*)
Training Requirements	All certified assessors for CASAS Life Skills – Listening must complete the training workshop provided by VALRC. After successfully completing the workshop, participants must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment.

Assessment Name	**COMPREHENSIVE ADULT STUDENT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (CASAS) LIFE SKILLS**
Applicable Program	ESL; ABE; and ASE
Subject	Reading
Active Date	July 1, 2003
Expiration Date	June 30, 2010

	ESL	ABE and ASE
Recommended NRS Levels	☑ ESL Beginning Literacy ☑ ESL Low Beginning ☑ ESL High Beginning ☑ ESL Intermediate Low ☑ ESL Intermediate High ☑ ESL Advanced	☑ ABE Beginning Literacy ☑ ABE Beginning Basic Education ☑ ABE Intermediate Low ☑ ABE Intermediate High ☑ ASE Low ☑ ASE High

Version Available	Print
Administration Type	Individual or Group
Administration Time	1 hour (approximately)
Locator Required	No
Forms Available	Life Skills Series Forms 27, 28, 31-38; Levels A-D (AX and BX are bridges to the next level)
Length before Pre-test	Less than 6 hours of instruction
Length before Post-test	100 hours (new learner) 75 – 100 hours (continuing learners)

Item Type/Content	CASAS Life Skills – Reading is an assessment of reading comprehension for adult basic education learners in everyday life skills. The assessment requires learners to scan and interpret functional items such as charts, forms, signs, and other types of reading samples.
Scoring Procedures	Printed answer keys and scoring charts are available for administrators. Scoring software is also available. Raw scores of correct learner responses are converted into scale scores. (*Scale score determines EFL.*)

Accommodations	Adjust environment but not format. (*See administrator's guide for complete description.*)
Training Requirements	All certified assessors for CASAS Life Skills – Reading must complete the training workshop provided by VALRC. After successfully completing the workshop, participants must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment.

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Assessment Name	**COMPREHENSIVE ADULT STUDENT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (CASAS) LIFE SKILLS**
Applicable Program	ABE; ASE
Subject	Mathematics
Active Date	July 1, 2003
Expiration Date	June 30, 2010
Recommended NRS Levels	☑ ABE Beginning Literacy ☑ ABE Beginning Basic Education ☑ ABE Intermediate Low ☑ ABE Intermediate High ☑ ASE Low ☑ ASE High
Version Available	Print
Administration Type	Individual or Group
Administration Time	1 hour (approximately)
Locator Required	No
Forms Available	Life Skills Series Forms 31-38; Levels A-D
Length before Pre-test	Less than 6 hours of instruction
Length before Post-test	100 hours (new learner) 75 – 100 hours (continuing learners)
Item Type/Content	CASAS Life Skills – Math is an assessment of math skills for adult basic education learners in everyday life skills. The assessment requires learners to perform basic computation, apply formulas, use basic algebra, locate information on a chart, table, or graph, and solve word problems.
Scoring Procedures	Printed answer keys and scoring charts are available for administrators. Scoring software is also available. Raw scores of correct learner responses are converted into scale scores. (*Scale score determines EFL.*)
Accommodations	Adjust environment but not format. *(See administrator's guide for complete description.)*
Training Requirements	All certified assessors for CASAS Life Skills – Mathematics must complete the training workshop provided by VALRC. After successfully completing the workshop, participants must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment.

Assessment Name	**TEST OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION (TABE)**
Applicable Program	ABE; ASE
Subject	Reading
Active Date	July 1, 2003 (Form 7 and 8) July 1, 2005 (Form 9 and 10)
Expiration Date	June 30, 2008 (Form 7 and 8) June 30, 2010 (Form 9 and 10)
Recommended NRS Levels	☑ ABE Beginning Literacy ☑ ABE Beginning Basic Education ☑ ABE Intermediate Low ☑ ABE Intermediate High ☑ ASE Low ☑ ASE High
Version Available	Computer-assisted (local computer and online); Print
Administration Type	Individual or Group
Administration Time	Locator: 12 minutes Complete Battery: 50 minutes Survey: 25 minutes
Locator Required	Yes (*The locator must be completed prior to completing the pre-test.)*
Forms Available	Forms 7 and 8: Complete Battery or Survey Forms 9 and 10: Complete Battery or Survey (Levels L, E, M, D, A – Complete Battery or Survey)
Length before Pre-test	Less than 6 hours of instruction
Length before Post-test	60 hours (same level, different form) 120 hours (same level, same form)
Item Type/Content	Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) – Reading focuses on reading items from everyday life, work, and other fictional and non-fictional content. Visual items are included in the reading items. With different levels, the information increases in complexity. Questions are in a multiple choice format.
Scoring Procedures	Raw scores are determined by counting the number correct. The number correct is converted into a scale score for reporting. Scoring is completed in one of three ways: (1) manually - carbonless answer sheet or scoring stencil; (2) scanning - scan the answer sheet with scoring software; (3) online - scored automatically by the online software. (*Scale score determines EFL.*)
Accommodations	Large Print, Braille, Audio editions are available.
Training Requirements	All certified assessors for TABE – Reading must complete either an online or in-person training workshop provided by VALRC. After successfully completing the workshop, participants must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment.

Assessment Name	**TEST OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION (TABE)**
Applicable Program	ABE; ASE
Subject	Applied Mathematics
Active Date	July 1, 2003 (Form 7 and 8) July 1, 2005 (Form 9 and 10)
Expiration Date	June 30, 2008 (Form 7 and 8) June 30, 2010 (Form 9 and 10)
Recommended NRS Levels	☑ ABE Beginning Literacy ☑ ABE Beginning Basic Education ☑ ABE Intermediate Low ☑ ABE Intermediate High ☑ ASE Low ☑ ASE High
Version Available	Computer-assisted (local computer and online); Print
Administration Type	Individual or Group
Administration Time	Locator: 12 minutes Complete Battery: 50 minutes Survey: 25 minutes
Locator Required	Yes (*The locator must be completed prior to completing the pre-test.*)
Forms Available	Forms 7 and 8: Complete Battery or Survey Forms 9 and 10: Complete Battery or Survey (Levels L, E, M, D, A – Complete Battery or Survey)
Length before Pre-test	Less than 6 hours of instruction
Length before Post-test	60 hours (same level, different form) 120 hours (same level, same form)
Item Type/Content	Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) – Applied Mathematics focuses on mathematical items from everyday life, the world of work, and other familiar contexts. Visual items are included, such as charts, graphs, or documents. With different levels, the information increases in complexity. Questions are in a multiple choice format.
Scoring Procedures	Raw scores are determined by counting the number correct. The number correct is converted into a scale score for reporting. Scoring is completed in one of three ways: (1) manually - carbonless answer sheet or scoring stencil; (2) scanning - scan the answer sheet with scoring software; (3) online - scored automatically by the online software. (*Scale score determines EFL.*)
Accommodations	Large Print, Braille, Audio editions are available.
Training Requirements	All certified assessors for TABE – Reading must complete either an online or in-person training workshop provided by VALRC. After successfully completing the workshop, participants must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment.

Assessment Name	**TEST OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION (TABE)**
Applicable Program	ABE; ASE
Subject	Language (Writing)
Active Date	July 1, 2003 (Form 7 and 8) July 1, 2005 (Form 9 and 10)
Expiration Date	June 30, 2008 (Form 7 and 8) June 30, 2010 (Form 9 and 10)
Recommended NRS Levels	☑ ABE Beginning Literacy ☑ ABE Beginning Basic Education ☑ ABE Intermediate Low ☑ ABE Intermediate High ☑ ASE Low ☑ ASE High

Version Available	Computer-assisted (local computer and online); Print
Administration Type	Individual or Group
Administration Time	Locator: 12 minutes Complete Battery: 50 minutes Survey: 25 minutes
Locator Required	Yes (*The locator must be completed prior to completing the pre-test.)*
Forms Available	Forms 7 and 8: Complete Battery or Survey Forms 9 and 10: Complete Battery or Survey (Levels L, E, M, D, A – Complete Battery or Survey)
Length before Pre-test	Less than 6 hours of instruction
Length before Post-test	60 hours (same level, different form) 120 hours (same level, same form)

Item Type/Content	Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) – Language (Writing) addresses the use, mechanics, formation, and development of English in life and the world of work. Items reflect the modern writing process, including editing. With different levels, the information increases in complexity. Questions are in a multiple choice format.
Scoring Procedures	Raw scores are determined by counting the number correct. The number correct is converted into a scale score for reporting. Scoring is completed in one of three ways: (1) manually - carbonless answer sheet or scoring stencil; (2) scanning - scan the answer sheet with scoring software; (3) online - scored automatically by the online software. (*Scale score determines EFL.*)

Accommodations	Large Print, Braille, Audio editions are available.
Training Requirements	All certified assessors for TABE – Reading must complete either an online or in-person training workshop provided by VALRC. After successfully completing the workshop, participants must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment.

Assessment Name	**WORKKEYS**
Applicable Program	ABE; ASE
Subject	Reading
Active Date	January 1, 2005
Expiration Date	June 30, 2010
Recommended NRS Levels	☐ ABE Beginning Literacy ☐ ABE Beginning Basic Education ☐ ABE Intermediate Low ☑ ABE Intermediate High ☑ ASE Low ☑ ASE High
Version Available	Computer-assisted (local computer); Print
Administration Type	Individual or Group
Administration Time	Computer-assisted: 55 minutes Print: 45 minutes
Locator Required	No
Forms Available	N/A
Length before Pre-test	Less than 6 hours of instruction
Length before Post-test	Completion of a semester or quarter course 60 – 100 hours
Item Type/Content	WorkKeys – Reading addresses various written documents found in the workplace. Examples of the documents include: letters, signs, memos, directions, and regulations. Charts and forms are not included in the reading assessment. The content is rated on five levels of difficulty. Each level builds on the other in terms of length and complexity.
Scoring Procedures	Five skill levels are measured beginning with Level 3 and ending with Level 7. Level 7 is the highest level attainable. Scale scores have been correlated to the levels for NRS reporting purposes. (*Scale score determines EFL.*)
Accommodations	See administrator's guide.
Training Requirements	Contact test publisher *Assessments are administered by trained staff through the Virginia Community College System.*

Assessment Name	**WORKKEYS**
Applicable Program	ABE; ASE
Subject	Applied Mathematics
Active Date	January 1, 2005
Expiration Date	June 30, 2010
Recommended NRS Levels	☐ ABE Beginning Literacy ☐ ABE Beginning Basic Education ☐ ABE Intermediate Low ☑ ABE Intermediate High ☑ ASE Low ☑ ASE High
Version Available	Computer-assisted (local computer); Print
Administration Type	Individual or Group
Administration Time	Computer-assisted: 55 minutes Print: 45 minutes
Locator Required	No
Forms Available	N/A
Length before Pre-test	Less than 6 hours of instruction
Length before Post-test	Completion of a semester or quarter course 60 – 100 hours
Item Type/Content	WorkKeys – Math addresses various mathematical problems found in the workplace. Learners must set-up and solve problems. A calculator and formula sheet are provided. The content is rated on five levels of difficulty. Each level builds on the other in terms of length and complexity.
Scoring Procedures	Five skill levels are measured beginning with Level 3 and ending with Level 7. Level 7 is the highest level attainable. Scale scores have been correlated to the levels for NRS reporting purposes. (*Scale score determines EFL.*)
Accommodations	See administrator's guide
Training Requirements	Contact test publisher *Assessments are administered by trained staff through the Virginia Community College System.*

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Assessment Name	**WORKKEYS**
Applicable Program	ABE; ASE
Subject	Writing
Active Date	January 1, 2005
Expiration Date	June 30, 2010
Recommended NRS Levels	☐ ABE Beginning Literacy ☐ ABE Beginning Basic Education ☐ ABE Intermediate Low ☑ ABE Intermediate High ☑ ASE Low ☑ ASE High
Version Available	Computer-assisted (local computer); Print
Administration Type	Individual or Group
Administration Time	Computer-assisted: 55 minutes Print: 45 minutes
Locator Required	No
Forms Available	N/A
Length before Pre-test	Less than 6 hours of instruction
Length before Post-test	Completion of a semester or quarter course 60 – 100 hours
Item Type/Content	WorkKeys – Writing addresses various written communication in the workplace. Learners must listen to audio conversations and write down critical information in messages. The length of time per message (6 total) varies. The content is rated on five levels of difficulty. Each level builds on the other in terms of length and complexity.
Scoring Procedures	Five skill levels are measured beginning with Level 1 and ending with Level 5. Level 5 is the highest level attainable. Scale scores have been correlated to the levels for NRS reporting purposes. (*Scale score determines EFL.*)
Accommodations	See administrator's guide.
Training Requirements	Contact test publisher *Assessments are administered by trained staff through the Virginia Community College System.*

C. ASSESSMENT REPORTING

📖 💻 Policy 3.1

Programs must report each assessment (pre- and/or post-test) administered to learners within one week of the test administration during the fiscal year. The assessment must be reported on the learner intake form and in the Web-based data system.

Each reported assessment must identify:

- **Test type**
- **Test date**
- **Test subject**
- **Test form**
- **Pre/Post-test**

- **Scale Score**
- **Test administrator/staff**
- **Test identification**
- **Post-test waiver and justification (if applicable)**

It is the responsibility of local programs to ensure timely assessment of learners both at program start and program completion. In addition, proper reporting of learner assessments in the NRS Web-based data system provides an opportunity for local programs to verify the correct administration of assessments and take corrective action as soon as possible.

EFL IDENTIFICATION

When programs report learner assessments in the NRS Web-based data system, only scale scores may be reported for determining EFL. Raw scores, grade equivalents, and learner performance levels (SPLs) may not be reported. Once the scale score is entered into the data system, the learner's EFL will be identified. This EFL serves as the basis from which educational gains will be measured. Local programs should discuss educational levels and assessment results with learners using the scale scores.

PRE-TEST VERSUS POST-TEST IDENTIFICATION

The assessment administered should measure and be reflective of the skills developed in an instructional program. The first assessment administered to the learner is identified in the NRS Web-based data system as a pre-test for learners that attend the program for the first time. If the learner has continuous attendance, the next assessment administered is identified in the data system as a post-test. Should the learner continue in the program with the same program of study, each subsequent assessment is coded as a post-test. When a learner begins a new program of study, a different assessment should be administered. If a new assessment is administered, the assessment should be coded as a pre-test.

LOWEST EFL VERSUS INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM OF STUDY

If a learner is assessed in more than one area and scale scores reflect different EFLs, the learner shall be reported in the EFL represented by the lowest test score and instruction shall be provided to learner in that area, at a minimum.

<u>TEST TYPE OR SUBJECT CHANGE</u>

Learners may be assessed on more than one subject of an assessment or on different assessments during the fiscal year. This type of situation might occur when a learner works on speaking and listening skills in the first part of the year and transitions to a reading focus in the second part of the year. To demonstrate educational gains, the learner should complete an oral assessment to begin the year and a reading assessment in the second part. Staff must understand, however, that the results from different assessments may not be compared to one another to measure educational gain. For example, a CASAS – Reading for an ESL learner may not be compared to a BEST Plus.

<u>REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT INFORMATION IN THE DATA SYSTEM</u>

The NRS Web-based data system has error checks programmed into the system related to assessment reporting. Out of range scale scores, incorrect forms, and inappropriate post-test times are programmed to inform the local program when an assessment has been administered improperly. Additionally, the data system provides exports of data and reports with detailed information related to learner, staff, and class performance compared to assessments. Local programs should review these reports after each entry of learner assessment information to identify areas of improvement related to assessment administration and instructor performance.

D. QUALITY CONTROL PROCEDURES

<u>TEST ENVIRONMENT</u>

 Policy 3.2
Programs must provide locations used for assessment that maximize the opportunity for learners to demonstrate educational functioning level.

To ensure the reliability and validity of testing results, it is important that the environment be conducive to testing. Learners' performances may be adversely affected if the room in which they test is too cold, too hot, or poorly lighted. At a minimum, the following conditions should be available during testing:

- Appropriate size room to properly accommodate the number of test takers
- Room location with reduced noise and distractions
- Proper room lighting
- Comfortable room temperature
- Appropriate size table and chairs
- Access to a rest room
- Clock or other timing device visible to test taker(s)
- Chalk board, white board, or overhead projector
- Sufficient staffing for assistance

📖 **Policy 3.3**

Programs must have a written test security policy on file that includes proper storage of assessment materials with limited access, proper handling of assessment materials, and regular maintenance.

The integrity and security of a program's assessment system is critical to ensure that assessment results are true indicators of learners' performance. Poor management of assessment materials or poor test administration practices may result in inaccurate assessment results. Such data would not be considered reliable or valid, and could result in program sanctions.

All assessment-related materials (e.g., answer sheets, test booklets, norms booklets, and answer keys) should be secured and inventoried on a regular basis. To secure materials, programs should provide lockable storage that is not accessible to learners or the general public. Access to assessment materials should be limited to certified assessment staff. Only those materials specifically needed for a test administration should be removed from the locked storage. Completed learner answer sheets and scratch paper are considered secure materials and should be handled accordingly. Test booklets should be reviewed after each test administration to review for stray marks, missing pages, recorded answers, and overall condition. Any test booklet deemed unusable should be shredded. As a general rule, test booklets should be replaced after 15 to 20 administrations.

Security Guidelines
Local programs should adhere to the test publisher guidelines when securing assessments and related materials. The following are intended to guide assessment staff concerning issues that would constitute a breach of test security:

- Learners must not be exposed to test items or to the answers of assessment items before or following test administration.
- Assessment staff may not provide learners with answers to any assessment item.
- Assessment staff may not make suggestions as to how to respond to an assessment item before, during, or after a test administration.
- Assessment staff should not review with learners test items or test booklets before, during, or after test administration.
- Copying/printing/photographing **all or any part** of an assessment or taking notes about the items included on an assessment is **strictly prohibited**. As stated in the copyrights, testing materials may not be reproduced or used in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying or recording or by any information storage or retrieval systems.

- All persons are prohibited from logging into computer-assisted (online or local computer) assessment applications posing as a learner, current or fabricated, to view an assessment. Only an eligible learner is permitted to log in and take a computer-assisted assessment.
- The assessments must be administered in accordance with the instructions outlined in the administration manuals.
- Assessment items may not be used as a sample or practice item to demonstrate how to select responses. Sample items are included in assessments to familiarize learners with the format of the items and the procedures for selecting their answers.
- All persons, excluding qualified assessors, are prohibited from attempting to formally or informally score assessments.
- All assessors, proctors, or interpreters administering a paper or online assessment to learners approved for accommodations are prohibited from answering test questions in the computer-assisted or print assessment before, during, or after the administration of the test.
- All persons are prohibited from changing learners' answers to test items whether by providing hints or clues during a test administration, correcting wrong answers during a test administration, or by erasing or correcting answers or responses recorded/selected by the learner.

E. PURCHASING PROCEDURES FOR EACH ASSESSMENT

Local programs should contact the test publisher(s) related to the assessment(s) that will be administered for specific costs and purchasing requirements. Many test publishers require that only trained staff for the specific assessment may order the materials. In other instances, any staff in a local program may order materials. Select test publishers may require the purchase of a total number or range of administrations annually. As indicated previously, some assessment instruments are printed while others are computer-assisted. Local programs should keep this in mind when planning the purchase.

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IV.   APPENDIX

POLICIES SUMMARY

1.1 ADHERENCE TO POLICIES (P. 4)

Programs must adhere to the assessment policies identified to provide fair and equitable access of services to learners, make decisions about the quality of programs, and identify the need for program improvement.

2.1 LEARNERS TO BE ASSESSED (P. 12)

Programs must assess all learners reported into the NRS Web-based data system. Assessments must meet the following standards:
- A pre-test must be administered within the first 6 hours of instruction.
- A post-test must be administered within the time frame identified by the test publisher.*

2.2 PROGRAM EXIT (P. 13)

Programs must administer a new pre-test for any learner who has spent 90 or more consecutive days without program attendance or services.

2.3 ASSESSMENTS PERMITTED (P. 13)

Programs must administer to adult learners only those assessments that are NRS and state approved. All approved assessments must be administered in English.

2.4 TRAINING FOR ADMINISTERING ASSESSMENTS (P. 14)

All staff who administer assessments in a program must:
- successfully complete training on the OAEL assessment policy annually;
- successfully complete training to administer the assessment(s) every two years;
- successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment, if new staff.

2.5 ACCOMMODATING FOR LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES OR OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS (P. 15)

Learners with professionally certified documentation who self-identify a given physical, mental, or emotional disability must be provided an appropriate accommodation for assessment of EFL.

3.1 ASSESSMENT REPORTING (P. 34)

Programs must report each assessment (pre- and/or post-test) administered to learners within one week of the test administration during the fiscal year. The assessment must be reported on the learner intake form and in the Web-based data system. Each reported assessment must identify:

- Test type
- Test date
- Test subject
- Test form
- Pre/Post-test

- Scale Score
- Test administrator/staff
- Test identification
- Post-test waiver and justification (if applicable)

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3.2 TEST ENVIRONMENT (P. 35)

Programs must provide locations used for assessment that maximize the opportunity for learners to demonstrate educational functioning level.

3.3 TEST SECURITY (P. 36)

Programs must have a written test security policy on file that includes proper storage of assessment materials with limited access, proper handling of assessment materials, and regular maintenance.

* If a learner must be post-tested before the required time frame, a waiver must be submitted in the NRS Web-based data system identifying the approved justification for the waiver.

ACRONYM GUIDE

ABE   ADULT BASIC EDUCATION
ABE instructional programs provide basic skills to adults who are performing below the ninth-grade level in reading, writing, computation, and other basic skills.

ASE   ADULT SECONDARY EDUCATION
ASE instructional programs serve adults with less than a high school diploma (or equivalent) and with basic skills from ninth-grade and above, including the general education development certificate (GED), adult high school credit programs, and external diploma programs (EDP).

BEST   BASIC ENGLISH SKILLS TEST
The BEST is an NRS-approved assessment for conducting pre-testing and post-testing of ESL adult learners.

CASAS   COMPREHENSIVE ADULT STUDENT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM
CASAS is an NRS-approved assessment for conducting pre-testing and post-testing of adult learners.

EFL   EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL
Twelve educational functioning levels are identified by the National Reporting System. These learner categories address a general set of standards and competencies that adults must demonstrate to move to the next level. Each level addresses competency areas including basic reading and writing skills, numeracy skills, and functional and workplace skills.

EL/CIVICS   ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM
Qualifying state educational agencies receive federal funding from the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. The states award competitive grants to local programs that provide high-quality, integrated English literacy and civics education services to immigrants and other adults with limited English proficiency.

ESL/ESOL   ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE/ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES
ESL instructional programs provide basic educational services to adults who are not native speakers of English. The primary goal of ESL programs is proficiency in English.

GED   TESTS OF GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
The GED consists of a battery of five tests that, when passed, certifies the taker has American high school-level academic skills. The tests cover mathematics, reading, writing, science, and social studies. Passers in Virginia are issued an official Virginia GED Certificate.

NRS   NATIONAL REPORTING SYSTEM
This comprehensive, national accountability system for federally funded, state-administered adult education programs identifies definitions, establishes methods for collecting data, and develops measures for reporting learner and program performance.

OAEL   OFFICE OF ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY

Located within the Virginia Department of Education, OAEL distributes and oversees funding for adult education and literacy activities in Virginia.

OPT   OFFICIAL GED PRACTICE TEST

This half-length version of the Official GED Tests is often used to assess learner readiness to successfully complete the GED Tests. The OPT is not valid for NRS reporting.

TABE   TEST OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

The TABE is a widely used, NRS-approved assessment for conducting pre-testing and post-testing of adult learners.

SPL   STUDENT PERFORMANCE LEVEL

SPLs are a measure of student English language proficiency based on a standardized assessment. The Mainstream English Language Training (MELT) Project originally developed the SPLs in the 1980s. SPLs assisted in forming the basis of the skills identified in reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the various NRS educational functioning levels for English language learners.

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